

House Republican Press Release

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Legislators Endorse Adult Autism Program



Senate Minority Leader Pro Tempore John McKinney (R-Fairfield) and State Rep. Cathy Tymniak (R-133) joined with the Speaker of the House and other legislators to endorse the creation of a \$2 million program within the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) to assist adults living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). While it

is believed that up to 22,000 Connecticut residents are affected by ASD, the state remains one of only three in the nation that has no services available for adults with the disorder. The program endorsed by Senator McKinney and Rep. Tymniak would charge the DMR to identify and coordinate support services that would help adults with ASD to find employment and live more independently.

“There is a consensus developing in the legislature that we must do more to help adults with autism disorders, and this proposed program would be a much needed step in the right direction,” said Senator McKinney. “With a relatively small investment of resources, the state can identify the programs that will assist individuals with ADS to find the services they need to live independently within their own communities.

“Connecticut families have been working for many years to obtain services for people with autism who are over 18 years old,” said Representative Tymniak. “I am pleased that the state is now taking this small step toward assisting adults with ASD. I strongly support funding for this pilot program and expansion of this program statewide.”

Senator McKinney and Rep. Tymniak attended a legislative breakfast hosted by the Speaker of the House to discuss the proposed DMR program and to meet with families dealing with ASD. These families and their advocates were particularly concerned with the absence of services available once a child with autism turns 18. They also pointed out that service costs for ASD individuals are significantly lower than traditional DMR populations, and these costs tend to decrease over time as the individual becomes more and more independent.

“Representative Tymniak and I have met with many families from Fairfield who are dealing with this disorder, and we have learned a great deal from listening to them about their experiences. We both look forward to working together on this issue throughout the legislative session and providing some much needed assistance to families throughout

Connecticut who deal every day with the challenges of adult autism,” added Senator McKinney.